Letter No. 14. Thursday - 28 May 42.

Major. J. H. Massey -
6. Palestinian Coy. The Buffs
M. E. F.

My own darling lovely Barbara -

At last - we have a happy anniversary to celebrate, even though I am very unhappy that we cannot be together on Max's first birthday. I have had congratulations from Ben & various people in the Coy, & Bassem was kind enough to telephone - they all say that they hope I will be home for his next one. Hope! - my God, if I really thought that there was any doubt about it, I don't know what I should do. But believe me, my darling, I am thinking of you today, & of Marie, & very longingly. And remembering & thinking how brave you were how many difficulties & inconveniences you had to endure, being left all alone with eight months pregnancy before you. And what an awful time you had the last few days waiting for him to be born - on the day itself. And remembering how terribly sad I was that I could not have been with you shortly after Marie was born, & you were feeling mentally & physically relieved & happy. It was such a gloriously happy moment after Lisa was born - it could have been even more so this time, to know that once again we had a baby, safely born & perfect. It is all very cruel - first I had to leave you, neither of us even knowing if you were going to have a baby or not - then I am away & you are alone when he is born - now the same again when he is 1. And I have never seen him - & the three of us have never been together. It is difficult to console ourselves about so cruel - but we do know that we have immense & wonderful happiness to look forward ahead of us - the one condition necessary is now for me to come home.

what news have I for you, my love? Really nothing at all of importance, I am afraid. And as usual, I can only run along about that, that, & my best to please you in that way. I had a very pleasant evening with Burstein on Tuesday when we had dinner then went to the Palestine Orchestra Ballet. The music was lovely & I enjoyed the ballet. Though the standard was not too high. But it is a beginning of Palestinian, or rather the Jews effort to form their own ballet. There were no men at all & no real leaders or stars - except Gertrud Kraus, who runs it, who did a solo dance called the Orange, Jews by Lavrosky, of whom I have never heard. It was all very enthusiastically received. I had a long talk with Burstein during dinner after the show - all about Jewish problems now after the war. He told me that I am the only British officer he knows who understands their situation & difficulties, & even who has tried to. I am told by Ben that he likes & admires me very much & that he is probably the best friend I have in Palestine - it seems that the main reason for this is that I have always treated him as an equal - whereas the other majors & British officers in general rather patronise him & treat him in a condescending way. It is sad isn't it - he is an extremely intelligent, well read interesting man, & anything else but - would never dream of treating such a person as a or treat an equal. And yet our brainless self centred British officers come out here & treat such people in such a way - & then have the cheek to say "You had better watch those bloody Jews - they don't like us really". Admittedly the Jews must have minor skins than any other people upon earth & cannot adopt quite such a free & easy attitude to what other people think of them as we do - but that is really all the more reason why we should be especially careful & try to make certain that at the end

of the war we leave behind us a people who trust us like us, instead of just a people who will make use of us so long as we are a power.

Bronstein says I must get into Parliament after the war! He also says that you & I must come to Palestine for a holiday, & that we shall be very welcome.

I expect you will have seen in the papers that a biggish number of Poles has now arrived in the M.E. They are mainly men who have been interned by the Russians when they occupied part of Poland in Sept '39. It seems that the relations between the Poles & the Russians is very bad, & that the fault is mainly on the Polish side. And even worse is the relationship between the Poles & the Polish Jews, the trouble being purely & simply anti-Semitism. The Polish Jews now want to transfer from the Polish army into Jewish units of the British army - the Polish army is ready to agree (it seems that the official Polish Govt outlook & policy is not anti-semitic) - but our rules & regulations are so ponderous & complicated that nothing can be done. But it is really dreadful & discouraging, the way in which everybody seems to dislike everybody else, isn't it! - & the world does seem to be in such an awful mess & muddle in addition to the war itself.

Your letter 91 (90 missing) & 2 pcs (one May 4th & 10th (rather quick ones) came in on ~~the~~ Tuesday. I was delighted to have them. Things seem to be quite good at Sidcup & I am so pleased & pray that they will still be so when this letter arrives. I am very anxious to hear more about your job & how you like it & how you doing at it. And thank you for your sweet sympathy about my loss of Peter. I have recovered from the bitterness of the blow by now - & Toby is very nicely filling the

gap which was left in my mode of life. She is a dear little dog, but I'm afraid has not your Persian character - independence.

I have bought two pounds of dried apricots today, & will get some jam and/or honey tomorrow - so you may look forward to that in Aug/Sept.

Your letter 91 was a lovely one - gave me great pleasure & feeling. It was your first one from Cambridge, told me some things about your arrangements there - & spoke a lot about Marie & his new little friends, bless him. The only wrong thing was that you said you were glad that we had now finished discussing unfaithfulness - I'm afraid that in my last letter but one I wrote another short chapter on the subject - but it was in answer to something in one of your letters. So you must please forgive me. I agree that it is a hateful subject - it is hereby banished. I can assure you, my own darling, that never for one moment have I doubted your love & constancy, I am quite sure that you know that & also know how wonderfully thankful & happy I am because of it. But men have such a fatal reputation & we are so far apart. I suppose that was why I planned to reassure you about me from time to time. Maybe my reasons are too idealistic - but I feel so much that way. But thankyou for calling me a healthy animal - I certainly do feel very healthy & very animalish about you.

And hereby the subject is banished.

Saturday - Friday 30th: I think I had better tell you what is happening with my officers. That dreadful casualty

person has now gone, thank goodness. He is definitely to be thrown out of the Army. But the process is such a long one, & I was drawn off with having the fat, lazy, lying cad about the place, & persuaded Col. L. to take him off my hands. Col. L. is a very weak & silly man. I had had Cassidy confined to camp for a month & doing orderly officer every day, nor did I allow him to use the mess - but Col. L. thought that this treatment was rather harsh, & so he is now having an idle time at the R.R.T.D. It's the old trouble of you must treat an officer as a gentleman - which I do not agree with at all.

Bloody Dickman is to be court martialled & remains in close arrest - so I am thankful that I do not have to see him. The story is too long & silly to tell you about in a letter - but I will give you a good laugh about it when I come home. Do talk about three months after I come home & then we may have got round to such ordinary topics again.

Atkin's wife has had a baby - a daughter. And he was able to take her to the nursing home, see her after the baby was born, & go & see her every day, & take them home from the nursing home. It's a bit galling for me to have stand by & watch all this going on. He is having a tea party for the child at Nakuru this afternoon - I managed to make excuses not to go, but heard this morning that he was upset & offended, so I have just been on the phone & told him I will go. Bloke it - this kind of business just makes me feel all the more sad & homesick.

And last week I got a new officer to replace my casualties. His name is Hackor, & he is a big dusky young fellow of 23 or 4. He is a product of the

last officers course at Saraband. I had applied to come to this Coy - he said he had heard that No. 6 was the best & most hard working Coy. He is a serious & pleasant lad, I like him very much. He was Russian. Rather a loss this week - I have lost my C.S.M. Cannie who has been transferred to the M.E. Commandos - he will be very useful to them, & is pleased to go to a more active job. I also sorry to leave the Coy. I am lucky in having an excellent Sgt to promote in his place, a chap named Slavins. He is first class, technically - & is an extremely pleasant type, which is a great help. And he comes from Latvia! - it's amazing where all these chaps come from, isn't it? I'm very pleased to be able promote him, because he had the opportunity of going to another Coy, as C.S.M., a few weeks ago, & preferred to remain here as a Sgt - which was quite a compliment to me & to this Coy.

You said in your letter darling, that you thought your writing was better than your conversation. I think that you are very good indeed at both. Don't you think that many of these brilliant witty talkers, talk rather a lot of nonsense, & are very much inclined to make sense rather subordinate to wit & brilliance. You say you think your brain is slow - but I certainly don't think that - except that you are sometimes rather miserly about matters of business - & you were very slow in deciding to marry me! But so often I find myself thinking of something to say & then deciding that it is not worth saying. And many times, saying something immediately wishing that I had not. I often rather wonder if there

is any sincerity much behind these witty brilliant people - are they not making rather a deliberate impression on people, irrespective of sense or substance. Or am I being rather smug, & excusing my own deficiencies by belittling those people who converse better than I do?

I certainly agree that it is very pleasant to be able to talk well & amusingly on occasions, & especially when one is thrown among strangers. It is apt to be tongue tied. But apart from such occasions, I always feel very easy when talking to you - & also when we are just sitting & saying very little. I read an article in Time the other day, about Winant, the U.S. Ambassador, who is said to be a truly great man, certain to be President one day. At his first public occasion in London he was unexpectedly asked to make a speech. He stood up & was completely silent for four straight minutes then said "I made the mistake once before of being the first on my feet when I was not ready for it" - that was all he said.

Anyway, we will practice on eachother, darling - over nice quiet Frenches before dinner - & during dinner. I think you talk very well when you want to - feel like it - I am much more in need of practice & coaching. It is a fine thing to be complementary & a help to eachother. You said in one letter that you felt you could help me - of that I am very certain. And I want to help you in any & every way I can. Goodness knows what I shall find to criticise in you, but I will do my best & you can help me to help you.

I have craved being a little more social & friendly with the R.A.F here now. There is nobody I

like particularly – but I really have to get away from all my news sometime, & have a beer & some idle chat with English people.

I am so pleased to hear that you were going to have your photograph taken with Marie & I hope that this has materialised & that you have posted it by Airmail. You have been awfully idle about photos & snaps though – the most recent I have are of Mar at 6 months. And I have been showering you with pictures of me from all angles. I have my album all ready & waiting & have put nothing at all in it for 3 or 4 months

The weather is pretty good now – the rains have finished of course, but it is still reasonably warm & not too hot, apart from one khamsin. This place is now covered with flowery weeds instead of being hard cracked barren ground. And there are a multitude of small pretty flowers of all shapes & colours. The nights are lovely, cool, & I sleep under one blanket, & today. Just now, the moon is full, & very brilliant & silvery. If only you could be here. There is ~~Geoffrey~~ another squadron leader, who was here pre war, & he actually has his wife & boy living on the place with him. It is too much for me.

There is nothing very cheerful, is there darling? All the war news is confused, from every where, & it is not easy to tell how we are doing.

I long & yearn to be with you & to hold you in my arms & kiss you. Love & kisses to Mar & little Marie from his lonely old daddy.

And all my love & best wishes for you my sweetest Mary.

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